

of the plants on the Brandege list can no longer be found. Presumably they have fallen victim to urban development.

TO ATTEND MALACOLOGISTS' MEETING

ALLYN SMITH, executive assistant to the director of the Academy, and Dr. Leo G. Hertlein, associate curator of geology, will attend the annual meeting of the American Malacological Union, July 11-14 at San Diego. Smith is president of the organization and program chairman for this meeting.

LITTLE BIRD WITH A BIG PROBLEM

WE CAN NOW REPORT a happy ending to a family problem which seemed almost hopeless early in June.

A baby killdeer, just a few days old, was discovered to be "beached" on the museum roof. Its parents evidently mistook the flat gravel covering for a gravel bank, a favorite nesting place of killdeer. (If anything complimentary about the parents can be said, it's that they chose a section of the roof directly above the Department of Birds and Mammals and then made enough noise to attract the attention of the Department's curator, Dr. Robert T. Orr.)

At first glance the situation seemed quite serious. Killdeer parents, you see, don't feed their young; they expect hatchlings to forage for themselves. But who could find even a single morsel of food on a barren museum roof? And worse yet there was no water. Dr. Orr with a sigh and not too much hope of success decided it was up to his Department to furnish both.

Until the supply ran out, Dr. Orr and his assistant, Jacqueline Schonewald, took up rations of meal worms and water four times daily. The worms were gratefully received not only by the baby but, unfortunately, by mama and papa, too. After the store of meal worms was exhausted the Department of Birds and Mammals turned in desperation to brine shrimp, a staple food in the Aquarium. The killdeer loved them.

In the meantime, Dr. Orr searched the scientific literature on the nesting habits of killdeer and found that a nestful (of four) was similarly stranded in 1922 on a race track grandstand roof at the State Fairgrounds near Lincoln, Nebraska. If the gentlemen in charge of such scientific writings care to, they may now add that at least three killdeer in the world are quite fond of fish food.

The happy ending? Oh, yes, well at this time the month-old killdeer is still on the roof. He has grown big and strong and will soon, the Department of Birds and Mammals believes, be able to fly sturdily off the roof and away.

NEW MEMBERS

THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS were elected by the Council at its meeting of June 21, 1956:

REGULAR MEMBERSHIP

Mr. James S. Butler
Mr. James L. Coatsworth
Mr. Irving L. Fisk
Mr. Samuel D. Friedman
Mrs. A. E. Larsen

FAMILY MEMBERSHIP

Mr. Terry M. Anderson
Mr. B. N. Dickinson
Mrs. John Osborn

STUDENT MEMBERSHIP

Betty Gorman

ACADEMY NEWS LETTER

NUMBER 199

JULY 1956

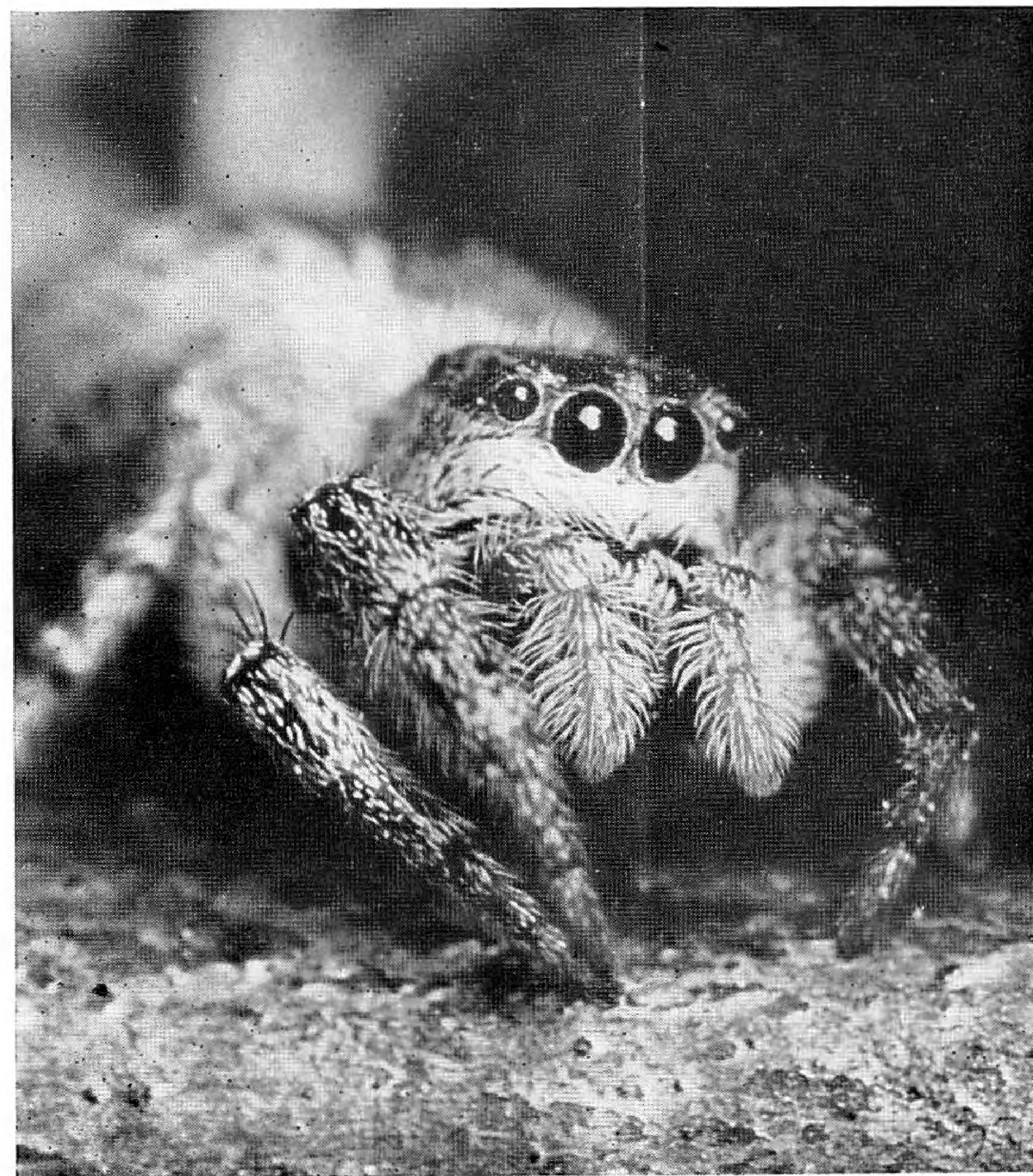


Photo by Edward S. Ross

YOU'VE GOT THESE IN YOUR GARDEN!
(See Page 2)

Published Monthly by
CALIFORNIA ACADEMY OF SCIENCES
GOLDEN GATE PARK • SAN FRANCISCO

CALIFORNIA ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

GOLDEN GATE PARK • SAN FRANCISCO

1 1 1

July Announcement

THE REGULAR JULY MEETING of the California Academy of Sciences will be held at 8:15 P. M., Wednesday, July 18, in the May Treat Morrison Auditorium. Dr. Edward S. Ross, the Academy's curator of entomology, will present an illustrated lecture:

"ENTOMOLOGICAL EXPLORATIONS IN FAR-OFF SUBURBIA"

DR. ROSS will describe numerous expeditions he has made, pushing his way through asphalt jungles teeming with vehicular traffic, all the way to the outskirts of the city.

Dr. Ross will show a wide selection of Kodachromes which are prime examples of his now-famous "close-up" technique. His insect subjects for this lecture are familiar ones in the Bay Area: ants, aphids, butterflies (both residents and transients), Jerusalem crickets, moths, yellowjackets, and so on. But as Dr. Ross points out, most of us are familiar with these common insects only in a superficial way. The high magnification of Dr. Ross' camera reveals unexpected beauty and dozens of dramatic conflicts between insect and insect.

In this survey, Dr. Ross will have quite a lot to say about aphids. He rates them near the top—along with yellowjackets—as the inspiration of phone calls to his Department from troubled suburbanite gardeners. Dr. Ross will also tell the story of San Francisco's lost butterflies and will describe a slave raid by a colony of red ants. In addition he will provide some tips on "how to get pleasure out of a garden full of insects." Many people might consider the ideal garden to be one free of all insects except those which assist in pollination; Dr. Ross does not entirely agree. But short of this happy condition, he advises a garden with many insects rather than just a few. Trouble stems from not having a *balanced* insect community in your back yard, he explains.

As an example of a handy insect to have around the home Dr. Ross cites the jumping spider (a specimen of which is pictured on the cover). He's guaranteed as an insect killer. And he looks it.

PRIZE-WINNING PHOTOS EXHIBITED

THIRTY-FOUR selected photographs from winners of the William Randolph Hearst Annual Photo Competition are on display in Lovell White Hall adjacent to the San Francisco *Examiner* Museum of Photography.

Winners from the *Examiner* are Illegal Punch (a fight picture) and Dexterous Mann (football action shot), both by photographer Charley Doherty; Havoc From Runaway Truck by Paul Olsen; Historic Bell Tower Falls in Fire by Bob Bryant; and "Mrs. Klamath" Goes Berserk (a bucking horse at a rodeo) by Gordon Stone.

Winners from the San Francisco *Call-Bulletin* are "Little Kremlin" Conference by Emil Edgren and Rescued in Hotel Fire by Henry Ingwersen.

MARS IN THE NEWS

MAN ON MARS is the title of the summer show in the Alexander F. Morrison Planetarium, which the Planetarium staff is billing as the year's most spectacular show. Mars is substituting for the moon in the July-August spot this year because of its prominence in both the sky and the news.

This summer Mars comes closer to the earth (about 35 million miles) than it has been since 1939—and closer than it will be until 1971. Throughout this close approach, Mars will be under almost constant observation by telescopes the world around. (For an account of the Academy's part in the International Mars Patrol see the May-June 1956 issue of *Pacific Discovery*.)

TO SEE THE ARTIFICIAL SATELLITE

MORRISON PLANETARIUM, with the cooperation of *Popular Science Monthly*, is exhibiting a sturdy binocular stand, or support, which will make it possible (though not easy) to observe the forthcoming satellite with an ordinary pair of binoculars. The lone observer's chances of seeing a satellite after it is launched will depend a great deal on whether or not information about its orbit can be gathered quickly by professional observers and made available to the press. The model stand, which is made of materials that are readily available to the home handyman, is on display in the foyer of the Planetarium.

Academy members may be interested to know that first steps have been made here toward the organization of official satellite observation teams. On May 20, Dr. Armand Spitz, coördinator of visual satellite observations for the Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory, met with members of the Academy's Astronomy Department and with representatives of local amateur astronomical societies to work out preliminary plans for the setting up of "optical fences" in this area. Persons interested in lending a hand should write to W. C. Marion, 3511 Lyon Ave., Oakland, who has been named chairman for the channeling of information and coördination of planning.

Want to be a picket in one of these fences?

CENSUS OF SAN FRANCISCO PLANTS

TOP PRIORITY in the Department of Botany these days has been given to a check list of San Francisco flowering plants and ferns, which is nearing completion in the hands of curator John Thomas Howell and his two collaborators in this project, Peter H. Raven and Peter Rubtzoff. The three men feel as if they are completing this important work just one jump ahead of the bulldozers which are paving the way for still more houses and freeways.

According to Howell, the last time such a check list was compiled was in 1892. It was the work of Katharine Brandegee, Alice Eastwood's predecessor as curator of botany.

Howell's list will contain some 650 or so plants, about fifty more than were listed by Mrs. Brandegee sixty years ago. But many of these, Howell says, represent plants which have been introduced through the years. A great many